



State Senator Robert Garton District 41



Holiday safety proves important part of the season

INDIANAPOLIS - Christmas trees are sprouting out of living room floors throughout Indiana, and holiday lights and decorations are now being found in almost every house. State Senator Robert D. Garton (R-Columbus) urges Hoosiers to use caution while enjoying their holiday trimmings.

Trees, lights, and wrapping paper can be the key ingredients in a recipe for disaster, but with the proper attention to safety, the holiday season can be safely enjoyed. The United States Fire Administration reports that holiday season fires injure about 2,000 people and cause more than \$500 million in damage annually.

Those who celebrate the holidays with lights should check all strands for proof of inspection by a testing laboratory. When lights from a previous year are used, the owner should check them for frayed wires and broken sockets.

Common sense is the most important thing. Don't overload circuits with lights, and if you enjoy a live tree, make sure to keep it watered. Another holiday danger is that of candles. According to the National Fire Protection Association, lit candles caused home fires that killed 157 people in the U.S. in 1998, more than in any year studied since 1980. Candle fires totaled 12,540 for the same year, essentially doubling the number reported in 1990. Almost half of home candle fires start in the bedroom, and the month of December, historically, has had almost twice the number of home candle fires as in any other month, according to the report.

The report states that 37 percent of candle-related fires occurred because candles were left unattended, abandoned or inadequately controlled, 19 percent occurred because some form of combustible material was left too close to the candle, and 9 percent occurred because children were playing with candles or something flammable near candles.

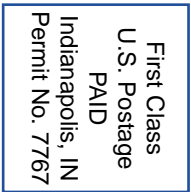
While candles create a beautiful atmosphere and are especially popular around the holidays, it's important to remember that safe use of candles is necessary. Experts agree it is too risky to leave a lit candle burning in a room where no one is present, or where you'll fall asleep.

Garton represents District 41, which includes Bartholomew County and portions of Johnson and Shelby counties.

Straight from the Senate



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